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REVIEWS

The Behavior of Crowds, A Psychological Study. By EVERETT DEAN MARTIN. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1920. Pp. vii+305. \$2.00.

The "motivation" of this book is the author's conviction that crowd formation and crowd thinking are daily becoming a more serious menace to civilization. "I know of nothing," he says (p. 6), "which today so menaces, not only the values of civilization, but also—it is the same thing in other words, perhaps—the achievement of personality and true knowledge of self as the growing habit of behavior as crowds." Few students of social psychology will be disposed to deny the danger, or fail to share the author's apprehension. The crowd (not the group) is a social nuisance, and the formation of crowds is made increasingly easy by the rapid development of the technique of intercommunication.

It is perhaps necessary to point out that the crowd, as here conceived, is "the peculiar mental condition which sometimes occurs when people think and act together, either immediately where the members of the group are present and in close contact, or remotely as when they affect one another in a certain way through the medium of an organization, a party or sect, the press, etc." (p. 6). That is to say, the crowds here under discussion are "psychological" crowds. Any group may become such a crowd.

Now the formation and behavior of the psychological crowd are, so the author believes, in large part unconsciously determined, and hence are explicable only by application of the method employed in psychoanalysis in ferreting out the repressions, complexes, compulsions, fixations, etc., which constitute the mechanism of the individually unconscious.

Since "the apparently 'impersonal' behavior of the neurotic is psychologically determined, though unconsciously, may there not be a like unconscious psychic determination of much that is called social behavior?" "It is my thesis," the author declares, "that this is so, and that there are certain types of social behavior which are characterized by unconscious motivation to such a degree that they may be placed in a definite class of psychic-phenomena" (p. 5), that is, of course, in

the class of crowd phenomena. He puts in italics the statement that, "the crowd-mind is a phenomenon which should best be classed with dreams, delusions, and the various forms of automatic behavior" (p. 19). Crowd behavior, then, is "in a sense, psychopathic and has many elements in common with somnambulism, the compulsion neurosis, and even paranoia" (p. 50).

But is crowd behavior really psychopathic? Is crowd-mindedness really a disease? If so it is practically universal, for there are few indeed who are not affected by the influence of one or more crowds. We are all crowd men more or less. Would it not be more accurate to say that crowd behavior is analogous in some respects to that of the neurotic? It certainly sometimes resembles that of the lunatic! But there is nothing pathological, strictly or "in a sense," in, for instance, the antics of a college crowd celebrating a football victory. Such phenomena are wholly explicable on the basis of normal instincts and impulses.

But even if there is only an analogy between crowd behavior and, say, paranoia, it may still be true that much light may be thrown on crowd behavior by the employment of psychoanalysis; for normal as well as abnormal behavior often owes its origin to causes of which the individual is unaware, that is to say, unconscious. A method helpful in the study of abnormal psychic phenomena ought to be valuable also in the study of the normal. It is not necessary, then, to reduce crowd mentality to the psychopathic to justify the application of the author's method.

Reference of crowd motivation to the unconscious is, of course, as the author is well aware, nothing new. He quotes a page from Le Bon in which that author says, "It is precisely these general qualities of character, governed by forces of which we are unconscious . . . that in crowds become common property." But this book probes deeper than Le Bon. It makes practically no use of the suggestion-imitation principle. Many will regard this as a weakness. The author admits that suggestion and imitation do play a larger part in determining our thinking, but he sees "no reason why they should be more operative in causing the crowd-mind than in other social situations" (p. 33). Is it not because the crowd, in which the attention of many is strongly and narrowly focused and the emotions abnormally stimulated, presents a social situation peculiarly conducive to their operation?

None of the foregoing observations are designed to belittle the value of this book or its method. Merely as a revealer of the dangers of crowd formation and crowd thinking, of the hypocrisies, insincerities, and

asiniities of crowds, and the necessity of a new method of education to counteract their influence and to prevent their formation, it is one of the best books on the subject thus far published. No student of social psychology can afford to overlook it. Its wide reading by the public would be an excellent antidote to crowd formation and the dangers of crowd thinking.

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The Community: An Introduction to the Study of Community Leadership and Organization. By EDUARD C. LINDEMAN. New York: Association Press, 1921. Pp. 222. \$1.75.

Few of the younger generation of rural leaders have grasped the problems of country life with new insight and have the ability to clarify them by concise statement as has the author of this little manual, who is professor of sociology at the North Carolina College for Women and is executive secretary of the American Country Life Association. The book makes no pretension to be a thoroughgoing treatise, but is prepared primarily for the use of study groups of Y.M.C.A. workers and other community leaders and its purpose and content is best indicated by its subtitle. The latter half of the book dealing with community organization and leadership is more original and stronger than the earlier chapters. The instinctive basis of the social nature of man as outlined in the first chapter does not furnish the strongest or a conclusive argument. The word *institution* is used in various senses—is agriculture (p. 82) an institution? A clear-cut distinction between community and neighborhood is made (p. 9), but later the neighborhood is defined as consisting of "those families within walking distance of the home of any particular individual" (p. 29), a definition hardly tenable. The classification of communities, such as the division of urban communities into industrial, commercial, and political, is very suggestive and brings out new points of view; but the distinction between villages and open country communities is confusing, does not agree with other passages, and evidently is made with some hesitation by the author. The analysis of home relations is excellent. The chapter on "Needs and Agencies" forms a good outline for discussion purposes. Under religious organizations the International Sunday School Association and its local branches is not mentioned though it is more of an interdenominational agency and has a more widespread rural constituency than the Y.M.C.A.